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The Friday Letter

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FORMER ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR

TO: All the People at FNS

Just wanted to say "thanks" for my
5 years at FNS.

For those of you with whom I've
worked, I appreciate your skill
and dedication. And for those of
you with whom I've shared good
times—the music's been great, the
food terrific, and the company
even better.

I'll miss you.

Sonia

USDA Historian Kicks Off First 1989 Outlook Seminar

Acting Administrator Scott Dunn hosted the year's first Administrator's Outlook Seminar on February 23. Typically, these seminars address current issues or identify future trends that affect FNS programs. However, this seminar had a different perspective.

To commemorate the upcoming 20th Anniversary of the Food and Nutrition Service and the 100th Anniversary of the elevation of USDA to a Cabinet-level department, Dr. Wayne Rasmussen addressed FNS officials on the history and evolution of USDA and its programs. Rasmussen served for more than 50 years as the Department historian and has written numerous books and articles on USDA.

(Seminar Continued Page 5)

USDA
SERIALS BRANCH

On the Hill



House Convenes Hearing on School Nutrition and Meal Programs

The House Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education held a hearing March 2 on reauthorization of expiring child nutrition legislation. Congressman Matthew Martinez (D-CA) chaired the hearing.

Martinez' opening remarks referred to previous hearings held by the committee regarding WIC and the National School Lunch Program. One purpose of this hearing was to focus attention on the other important child nutrition programs.

William Goodling (R-PA), the ranking minority member, said the meal programs do not need \$6.4 million requested by FNS for more auditors or reviewers. Goodling also said he understood the section 4 reductions in subsidies for paid meals are not part of the Bush budget.

Several witnesses testified about the importance of the Child Nutrition Programs, along with suggestions about how legislation could be changed to improve the programs.

Rebecca Gardner, on behalf of the Nutrition Education and Training Program (NET) coordinators, testified about the importance of the NET Program. She urged that the program not only be reauthorized but that it be funded at 50 cents per child rather than at the current 10 cents per child.

(Hearing Continued Next Page)

(Hearing Continued)

Edward Cooney, Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), asked the committee to guard against cuts in the Child Nutrition Programs. FRAC's recommendations are to increase the WIC appropriation, to allow certain private sponsors in the Summer Food Service Program, to expand the breakfast and summer programs and include outreach funds, to improve the training and technical assistance in the Child Care Food Program, and to take the \$6.4 million requested for Federal reviews and spend it on the NET Program instead.

Dorothy Pannell, director of Food Services, Fairfax County Schools, testified on behalf of the Association of Schools for an Alternative to Commodities. She argued for the value of commodity letters of credit (CLOC) as opposed to donated commodities. Pannell cited the advantages of CLOC and asked the committee to grant all CLOC sites permanent status.

Robert Greenstein, director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, devoted his testimony to the WIC Program. He recommended a "mandatory spending" approach for WIC that requires a fixed level of spending at the amount in the budget resolution.

Assistant Secretary John W. Bode is scheduled to appear before the committee on March 23 to present the Administration's views.

-Story by Robert Beard
Office of Governmental Affairs



Black History Month Opening Ceremonies Set Tone

USDA's Jefferson Auditorium was packed. People coming late threaded their way into the hall, searching for seats. It was USDA's opening ceremony for Black History Month. The topic: the role of the black church in American society.

The voices of the audience quieted as the room slowly filled with the sound of The Jubilee Majestic Concert Choir. The music of their voices started so softly, you strained to hear. Then the sound of their voices swelled filling every space in the room.



Then the Reverend H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., of the Metropolitan Baptist Church stood to speak. The Reverend Hicks is a big man, with a deep and resonant voice. And, when he talks, people listen.

"These are strange times in which we live...times which call for serious thought, sober reflection," he said. He recalled a visit he had made to the shores of western Ghana, to a castle called El Mina. "Not a castle for royalty," he said, "but a symbol of shame, scourge, and inhumanity--a slave castle."

The Reverend Hicks paused, looked at the audience, and smiled. "And here we are. The time had passed. The seasons have changed....But what of today? And what of tomorrow? What sense does today make except in relation to what has gone before?

"So, you ask me to speak. 'Come, preacher, tell us of the contributions

(BHM Continued Page 5)

WRO Encourages Image Polishing

WRO employees were treated recently to a demonstration of how to improve their professional image through the effective use of a wardrobe.

The presentation, sponsored by the Federal Women's Program, featured classic clothing from the Nordstrom department store and commentary by Lai Chan, manager of the store's women's tailored clothing department. Five regional office employees modelled men's and women's clothing while Chan provided tips on coordinating and accessorizing a professional wardrobe.



Nordstrom's Lai Chan tells how this comfortable yet professional ensemble was put together for Miles Perez, food program specialist in the San Francisco Field Office.

In introducing the program, Acting Regional Administrator John W. Boozer stressed how dressing professionally can encourage others to respond professionally to you. Chan echoed Boozer's theme and added, "Clothing is an investment. A few pieces of high quality clothing and the right accessories can be the basis for your entire work wardrobe."

-Story and photo by Dee Amaden
WRO Public Affairs Staff

Commodities Are Tasted at MWRO Meeting

MWRO Food Distribution Program Director Terry Bowman, center, tastes USDA pork as Illinois TEFAP Director Helen Dowson samples canned sweet potatoes.



WRO Food Distribution Program staff met January 24 to discuss implementation of the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988. Food Distribution Division Director Alberta Frost provided clarification on how to handle the distribution of commodities available for soup kitchens and food banks. In other sessions, warehouse procedures and state plans were discussed.

A taste test was conducted to familiarize TEFAP coordinators with some of the products they will be receiving and allocating for soup kitchens. The coordinators sampled sweet potatoes, vegetarian beans, egg mix, canned lunch meat, and orange juice. The taste test drew praise for the donated foods, as well as for the culinary skills of Carla McGill of the Food Distribution Program, who prepared the test dishes.

-Story and photo by Lawrence Rudmann
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

MWRO Implements Healthy Pregnancy Initiative

The proclamation was presented by a Telsa alternative schools representative and Hilda Wittington, Chicago Department of Health Nutrition director, at a press conference announcing the Alternative Schools Health Career Scholarship Program.

The purpose of the program is to help students at four Chicago alternative schools for pregnant teens to stay healthier and to keep their babies healthier. Scholarships will be offered as incentives to encourage pregnant teens to participate in comprehensive prenatal services, including WIC, school breakfast and lunch, and prenatal care. Students can use the scholarships for college tuition and books in pursuing health careers.

-Story and photo by Lawrence Rudmann
MWRO Public Affairs Staff



MWRO Administrator Monroe Woods (right) joins with Dr. Lonnie Edwards, Chicago Department of Health director (center), and Dr. Reginald Brown, Chicago district superintendent of public schools, in accepting a proclamation signed by Chicago Mayor Eugene Sawyer proclaiming January 22-28 as Careers in Health Week.

SERO Trains Tennessee Staff to Administer Summer Program



Freeman Dennis (standing right) and Charles Kirby, regional director of Special Nutrition Programs (standing left) make a point about the Summer Food Service Program for Children to (seated left to right) Liz Pendleton, Nancy Whittemore, Marti Loyd, and Steve Neese of the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

SERO has signed an agreement to transfer the Summer Food Service Program for Children to the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS). SERO staffers provided program training December 6-8 to TDHS employees.

"They're extremely capable," said food program specialist Freeman Dennis, speaking of the state staff members. "They do an excellent job with the Child Care Food Program. We anticipate that they will do a fine job with the Summer Food Service Program for Children as well," added Dennis, who conducted the training sessions.

The training covered state agency operations, application approval, monitoring, claims payment, and sponsor training.

"The summer program is better operated by the states," Dennis said. "The state

(SERO Continued Last Page)

(BHM Continued)

of the black church. About what is not done and what should be done.'" The minister laughed, "prick our consciences and be gentle as you do."

"What are our problems today?" the minister asked. And he answered with a litany—children having children, drugs "beyond epidemic proportions." Our people are hungry, our children are hungry, he said, and it's not just for food.

We have a bigger problem, he said, than teenage pregnancy and drugs. "We have lost our sense of the sanctity of life....We are under attack from within. We are causing the carnage in our streets, the blood on our sidewalks, the blood we spill willingly, knowingly. Are we the only species of animal," he asked, "that preys on itself?"

The minister's voice was suddenly soft. "Martin Luther King said, 'Either we must learn to live together as brothers or we shall die together as fools.'"

In remembering the past, and in being sensitive to the needs of other humans, the minister said, we became better as individuals, better as Americans, and better as mankind.

"When you see our children having children—and asking for lunch—are you willing to share? When you see our people using drugs—and asking for lunch—are you willing to share? I stood there in that castle called El Mina and I heard the voice of prayer. 'Oh Lord, save my soul.' And I cried with my ancestors, 'ain't I got a right—to the tree of life?'" The minister paused and looked around the packed hall. "Share lunch," he said.

The USDA Jefferson Auditorium crowd rose to a standing ovation.

-Story by Dianne Durant
Public Information Staff



MARO Mixes Video With Personal Computers

MARO staff can learn all about WordPerfect and dBASE III PLUS at their own pace and without special training sessions.

The regional office recently purchased WordPerfect and dBASE III PLUS video instruction tapes and portable, self-contained, 13" television/video players to facilitate learning and to reduce costs for training.

"It gives everyone an opportunity to utilize training without the need to schedule official classes, and it helps IRM get other things done," says Pete Roebas, supervisory systems analyst. "We've received positive comments from the staff who tested the tapes."

The tapes and guidebooks take the WordPerfect user through beginning and intermediate skills, and dBASE instruction runs up to advanced programming. This is an improvement over the WordPerfect training file that is built into the system.

For more information about the video courses and the television units, which will be used by the personnel office for other training, contact Ellen Shannon, training officer, FTS 8-348-5058.

-Story by Marian Wig
MARO Public Affairs Staff

(Seminar Continued)

Rasmussen entertained a packed audience with anecdotes about USDA people and events, and at the same time challenged the participants with his concerns about the Department's future. He suggested that for USDA to remain what President Lincoln called "The People's Department," it needs to show increasing concern for the consumer of agricultural products, for the family farmer, for minorities and women, and for environmental protection.

-Story by Dr. Judith Lombard
Personnel Division

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

| JOB TITLE | AREA OF CONSID. | SERIES | GRADE | CLOSING DATE | VACANCY NUMBER | OFFICE LOCATION |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ○ Computer Systems Programmer | (A) | GS-334 | 11/12 | 03-27-89 | 89-77 | IRMD |
| ○ Personnel Staffing Specialist | (A) | GS-212 | 7/9/11 | 03-27-89 | 89-78 | PED |
| ○ Home Economist | (A) | GS-493 | 7/9 | 03-27-89 | 89-H-81 | HNIS |
| ○ Secretary | (A) | GS-318 | 5 | 03-27-89 | 89-H-82 | HNIS |
| ○ Investigator | (A) | GS-1810 | 5/7/9 | 04-10-89 | 89-83 | *BRD |
| ○ Investigator | (A) | GS-1810 | 5/7/9 | 04-10-89 | 89-84 | **BRD |
| ○ Management Analyst | (FNS-HQ) | GS-343 | 11 | 04-03-89 | 89-86 | IRMD |
| ○ Personnel Mgmt. Specialist | (A) | GS-201 | 11/12 | 04/10/89 | 89-87 | PED |
| ○ Labor Mgmt. Spec. | (G) | GM-233 | 13 | 04/10/89 | 89-88 | PED |
| ○ Secretary Steno | (G) | GS-318 | 7 | 04/10/89 | 89-89 | ORO |
| ○ Food Program Spec. | (A) | GS-120 | 11/12 | 04/10/89 | 89-90 | CND |
| ○ Supvry Operating Accountant | (FNS-N) | GM-510 | 13 | 04/10/89 | 89-91 | ACD |
| ○ Food Program Spec. | (FNS-N) | GS-170 | 12 | 04/10/89 | 89-92 | PAD |

Office Location

PED - Personnel Division
 ORO - Office of Regional Operations
 HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
 IRMD - Information Resources Management Division
 CND - Child Nutrition Division
 ACD - Accounting Division
 BRD - Benefit Redemption Division
 PAD - Program Accountability Division

Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources
 (G) - Governmentwide
 (HNIS) - Human Nutrition Information Service
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition Service (Headquarters)
 (FNS-N) - Food and Nutrition Service (Nationwide)
 * Columbus, Ohio
 ** St. Louis, MO

(SERO Continued)

agency is on-site and can give better service. It knows the area better and can administer the summer program more efficiently and effectively."

Because, by state law, the Tennessee Department of Education can only administer school programs, SERO had to find an alternate state agency to administer the summer program. It was not until TDHS volunteered in October that SERO could turn over administration of the program to the state.

SERO also has turned the South Carolina summer program over to that state, effective this fiscal year. SERO conducted training for South Carolina last summer. Only Georgia remains as a regionally operated and administered program.

"It will be tougher this year helping South Carolina and Tennessee get started with the summer program and also run the program in Georgia," Dennis said. "But through working together with the states, we'll have a better quality service for all concerned."

-Story and photo by Steve Watson
 SERO Public Affairs Staff